

Fanwood Station, South Side Waiting Room  
(Fanwood Station, New Jersey Transit Shelter)  
238 North Avenue  
Raritan Valley Line  
Fanwood  
Union County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-941

HABS  
NJ,  
20-FANWO,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
NJ  
20-FANWO,  
1-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FANWOOD STATION, SOUTH SIDE WAITING ROOM  
(Fanwood Station, New Jersey Transit Shelter)

HABS No. NJ-941

Location:

238 North Avenue  
Raritan Valley Line  
Fanwood  
Union County  
New Jersey

UTM Coordinates: Zone 18  
Easting: 551940 Northing: 4498870  
USGS QUAD: Chatham Scale: 1:24,000

Present Owner  
and Occupant:

New Jersey Transit

Present Use:

Commuter Waiting Room and Ticket Agent Office

Statement of  
Significance:

Fanwood Station is significant as the only remaining original frame railroad station on the Raritan Valley Line, as a good representative of railroad architecture during the Victorian period and for its key role in the development of the surrounding community of Fanwood.

The eastbound shelter at Fanwood Station is significant as part of the Fanwood Station National Register Complex. The Fanwood Station Complex consists of the main station building (1874), the shelter (1897) and the overpass (1946) bridging the two sides of the tracks.

The shelter, constructed in 1897 twenty-three years after the main station building was built in 1874, was converted into a temporary commuter shelter in 1965 when the main station was sold to the Borough of Fanwood and converted for use as a community center. The shelter was constructed by the Central Railroad of New Jersey. The architect for the shelter building is unknown. Plans for the shelter are attributed to the Engineer, Buildings and Bridges, Central Railroad of New Jersey.

## PART I - HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### The Fanwood Station

shelter was constructed in 1897 by the Central Railroad of New Jersey for use as a baggage facility and a passenger waiting area for the southside of the tracks. The shelter, although constructed twenty-three years after the main station building was built in 1874, stylistically reflects the Victorian influence of the main station building.

The main station building was one of several New Jersey stations to be constructed in the Victorian Carpenter Gothic style. Similar stations constructed at Branchport, Bound Brook, Perth Amboy and Asbury Park are no longer extant; Matawan on the North Jersey Coast Line remains standing minus its gingerbread trim as does Fanwood; and Red Bank Station has been recently restored to its original appearance.

The Fanwood Station was constructed in 1874 when the Central Railroad of New Jersey built a new line of railroad from Westfield to Plainfield. The station was named Fanwood after Miss Fanny Wood, the daughter of a railroad official. The lands surrounding the station became known as Fanwood Park. The Borough of Fanwood was created in 1895 when residents of Fanwood Park elected to become an independent municipality. The original station building served as a railroad station for passengers on the Central Railroad of New Jersey until 1965 when it was purchased by the Borough of Fanwood. It was at this time that the shelter across the tracks,

was adapted for use as the station building.

The Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) played an instrumental role in the development of the surrounding Fanwood community.

The development of Fanwood Park was encouraged by the CNJ's fast, frequent and punctual commuter trains which terminated at the Jersey City Terminal. Passengers would then board the ferries to various Manhattan locations.

The CNJ also helped promote the development of Fanwood Park by sponsoring a number of publications to promote passenger traffic on their lines. These publications encouraged the purchase of homes in the area with their accounts of the bucolic suburban environment and the description of the ease of commuting by rail.

An excerpt from one such publication The Suburbanite, published in 1906 reads:

"Fanwood is situated on high, rolling ground and is at all seasons of the year a beautiful and healthful place of residence. The woods that surround the town afford an effective wind break in winter and the locality is still further protected from cold northern and westerly winds by the ridge forming part of the Watchung mountains, that lies about a mile and a half distance from the town. Nestling at the foot of this ridge, and about a mile from Fanwood, with which it is

connected by a broad, level highway, is the ancient and picturesque village of Scotch Plains. The first settlement was made there in 1684 by Scotch pioneers. Fanwood is directly on the line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey and it is preferred as a place of residence by the commuter who wishes to live within a five minute walk of the station. The name "Fanwood" was derived from "Fanny Wood".

The CNJ also promoted specially priced excursion or day trips to popular Victorian resorts. Lake Hopatcong, the Jersey Shore and Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania were several popular Victorian summer destinations which were accessible through service on the CNJ.

At the time of the construction of Fanwood Station in 1874, the Central Railroad of New Jersey was in a period of great prosperity led by its dynamic president John Taylor Johnston.

By mid-twentieth century, the CNJ began a decline precipitated by the popularization of the automobile and the development of the state highway system. After several periods of bankruptcy, the CNJ, in 1976, was included in Conrail. In 1983, New Jersey Transit (NJ TRANSIT) assumed commuter service on the Raritan Valley Line.

Today, the original Fanwood Station is used as a community center and the eastbound shelter serves as the NJ TRANSIT waiting room and an office for the ticket agent. According to 1984 statistics, 841 daily commuters use the Fanwood Station for eastbound rail service. Twenty-five trains in each direction serve Fanwood on the weekdays while more limited service operates on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

## PART II - DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Fanwood Station is located on the New Jersey Transit Raritan Valley Line 13.9 miles from Newark Penn Station. Rail passenger service on the Raritan Valley Line extends from Newark Penn Station to High Bridge. Historically, the Raritan Valley Line was the Main Line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey. Fanwood Station is located in the downtown commercial area of the suburban New Jersey community of Fanwood. The station and tracks are at grade.

The Fanwood Station complex consists of three structures; the main station building, a two and one-half story Stick style station with Carpenter Gothic elements (1874), a one story wood frame shelter with an attached canopy (1897), and an enclosed steel truss pedestrian bridge (1946). Platforms are on either side of the tracks. The station is located on a spacious suburban site, straddling the boundary between a commercial area on the south and a residential district to the north. The tracks, which run southwest to the northeast, are located below the station level and are separated from it by a course rubble retaining wall. A double stairway connects the station and platform. (Refer to site plan.)

The shelter at Fanwood Station, located southeast of the tracks, consists of a one-story wood frame structure of rectangular plan which measures 30 feet by 18 feet. The roof is a gable on hip, its main ridge paralleling the tracks. Broad eaves on the northeast, northwest and southwest continue outward to assume the form of a pent roof canopy. Wood brackets at the overhanging eaves are articulated with exposed notched rafter ends. The roof, originally slate, is covered with tar paper. On the exterior walls, clapboard siding extends from the window sill level to the eaves. Three inch tongue and groove vertical sheathing covers the exterior wall area between ground level and window sill level. Trim is of board framing.

Original entryways to the shelter were centrally located on the east and west elevations. These doorways remain intact although the original Victorian panel doors have been removed and replaced with plywood doors. An additional entryway, originally a window, has been created at the front (trackside) elevation. The shelter is punctuated with nine double hung windows. Sash is two lights over two. Three of these windows have been boarded with plywood.

The canopy is asymmetrically attached to the north facade of the shelter. Freestanding bays are supported on a single row of timber columns and brackets. The gabled wood frame is sheathed in tar paper and boards. Connected to the canopy on the east is a wood frame stairway which provides access to the pedestrian bridge.

The interior plan of the shelter consists of a waiting room which measures 19 feet 3 inches by 18 feet 0 inches and a ticket office which measures 9 feet 3 inches by 18 feet 0 inches. The current ticket office was used as a baggage room until 1965 when the main station building was purchased by the Borough of Fanwood and converted into a community center.

The waiting room has a poured concrete floor. A wainscot of vertical matched boards painted dark green extends around the circumference of the room. Above the chair rail, horizontal matched boards are painted white. The ceiling also consists of matched boards. Original moulding at window surrounds and sills are intact. The original moulding at door surrounds has been removed. Seating consists of three board and iron frame park-type benches. Existing lighting consists of ceiling hung fluorescent fixtures and an incandescent wall fixture. Both seating and lighting are non-original. The ticket window is of substandard size. It is accented by a plain moulding and a wood shelf supported by a pair of brackets.

The ticket office was originally constructed as a baggage room. The floor and wall treatment is similar to the waiting room area with a poured concrete floor, wainscot of vertical matched boards and walls and ceiling of horizontal matched boards. Fluorescent lighting fixtures are not original. A wooden desk under the ticket window appears to be a nineteenth century piece.

The general condition of the structure is deteriorated. Wood borers, termites or powder post beetles, and dry rot has destroyed much of the wood fabric of the shelter. Clapboard is missing, broken and cupped in several areas. The roof, covered with tar paper leaks at several locations. Canopy support columns are in poor condition with dry rot at their bases. The sway back in the roof ridge line is indicative of the failure of the roof framing system. The canopy roof has several missing planks and a large number of holes.

The small size of the structure and its deteriorated condition make the shelter unfeasible for continued use for railroad operations purposes.

FANWOOD STATION, SOUTH SIDE WAITING ROOM  
(Fanwood Station, New Jersey Transit Shelter)  
HABS No. NJ-941 (Page 6)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fanwood Station Postcard c. 1907, collection of Timothy J. McMahon, Fair Hoven, NJ

Gardner, Edward F. A Pictorial Review. Central Railroad of New Jersey. Wilkes-Borre, PA, 1971

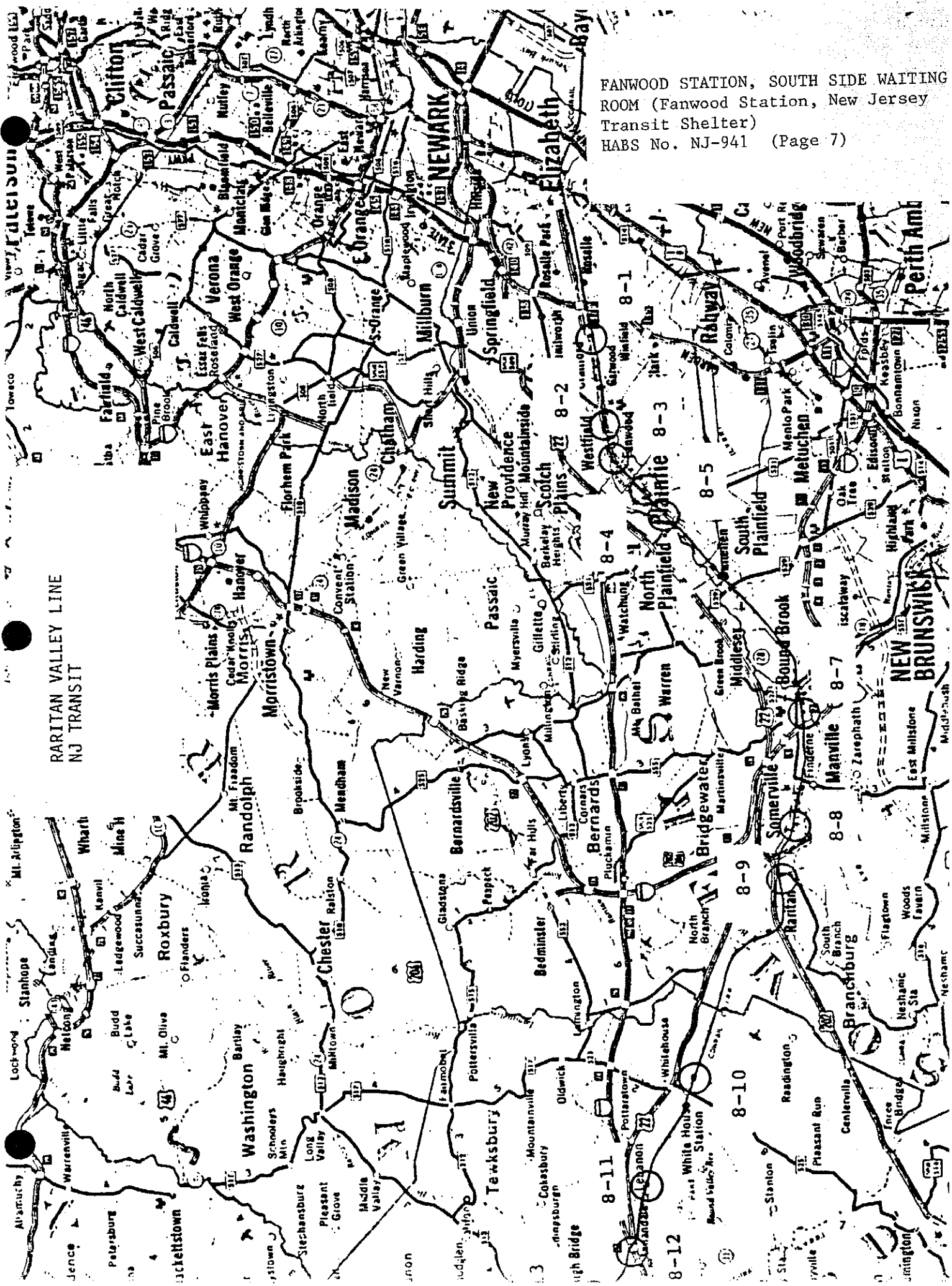
The Operating Railroad Stations of New Jersey, An Historical Survey, Heritage Studies, Inc. Princeton NJ, 1981

Osgood, Joseph, R. Historical Highlights, the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey, Jersey City, NJ, 1949

Plans, Fanwood Shelter, Conrail, Philadelphia, PA, 1897

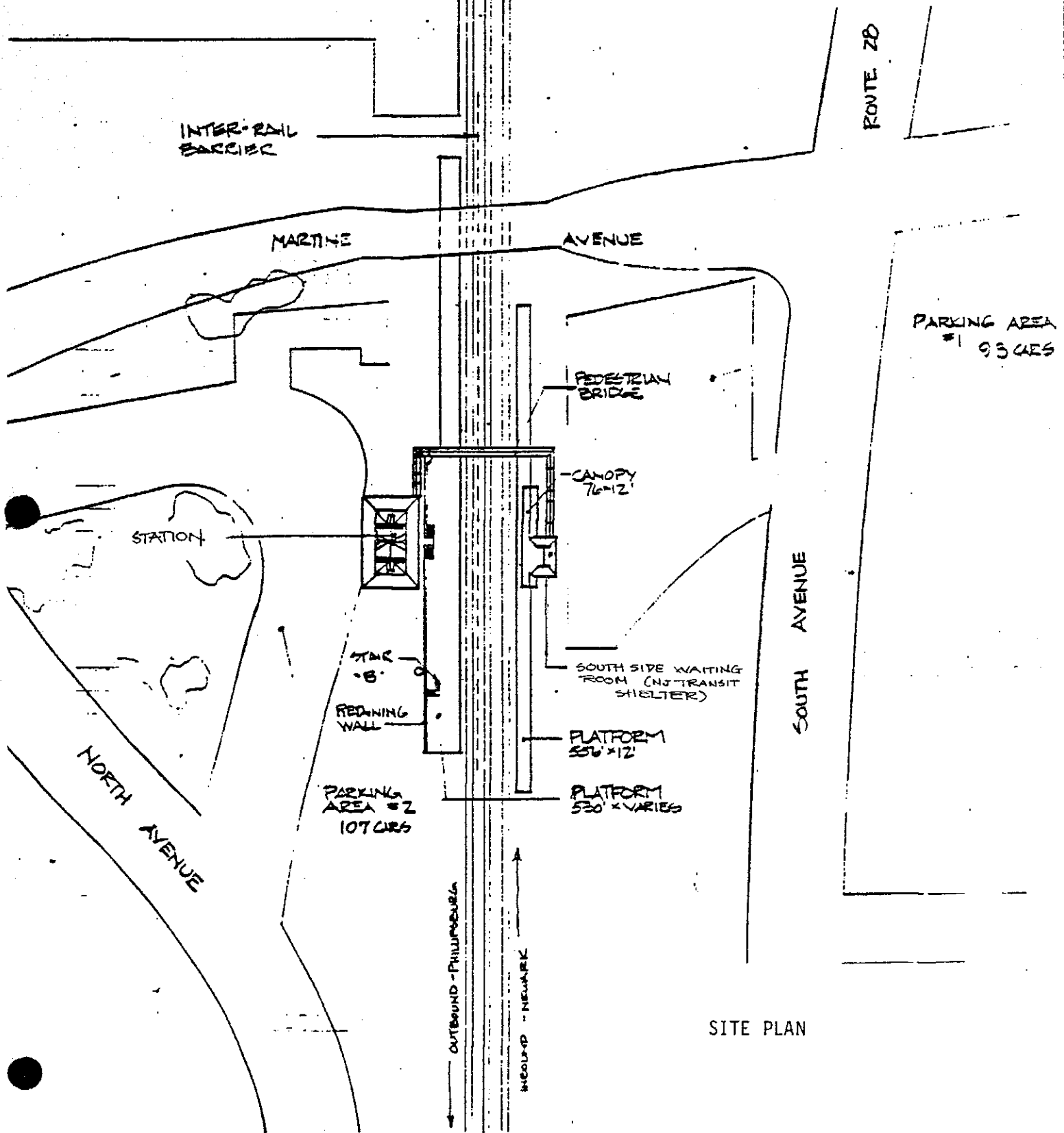
Roritan Valley Line, New Jersey Rail Station and Bus Terminal Modernization Study, Vol. IVF  
Richard Browne Associates, Wayne, NJ, 1982

Rowson, Morian, Under the Blue Hills, Scotch Plains, the Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, 1974

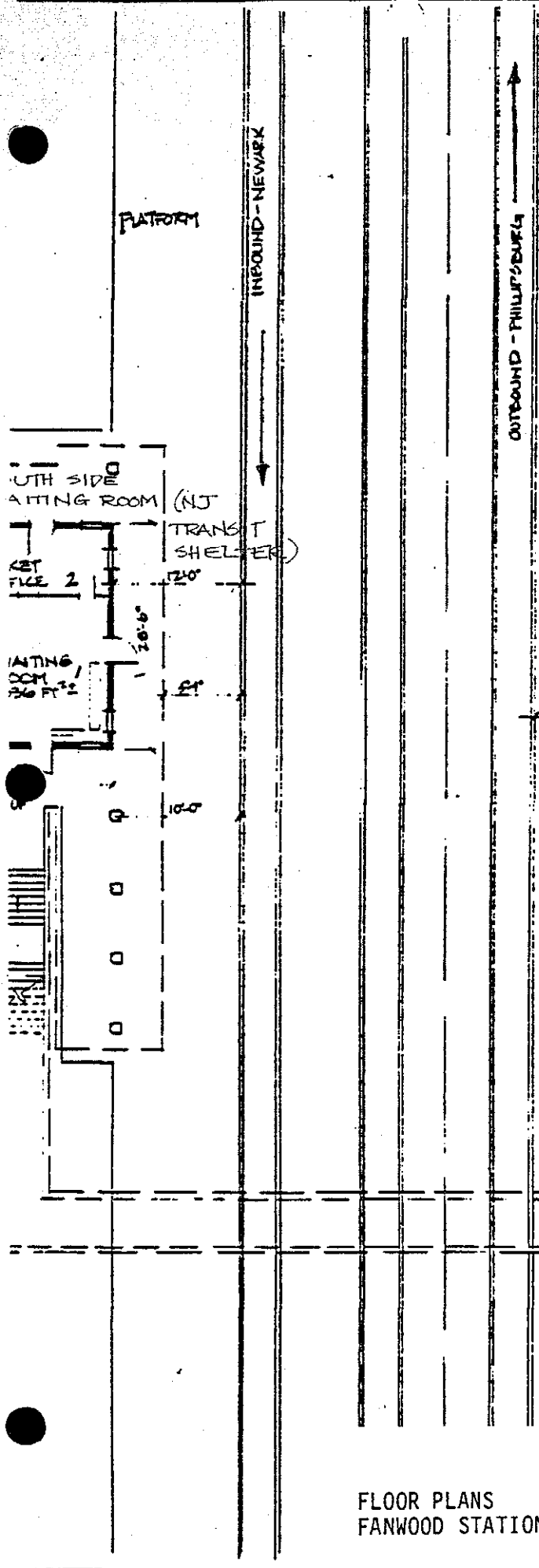


FANWOOD STATION, SOUTH SIDE WAITING ROOM (Fanwood Station, New Jersey Transit Shelter)  
HABS No. NJ-941 (Page 7)

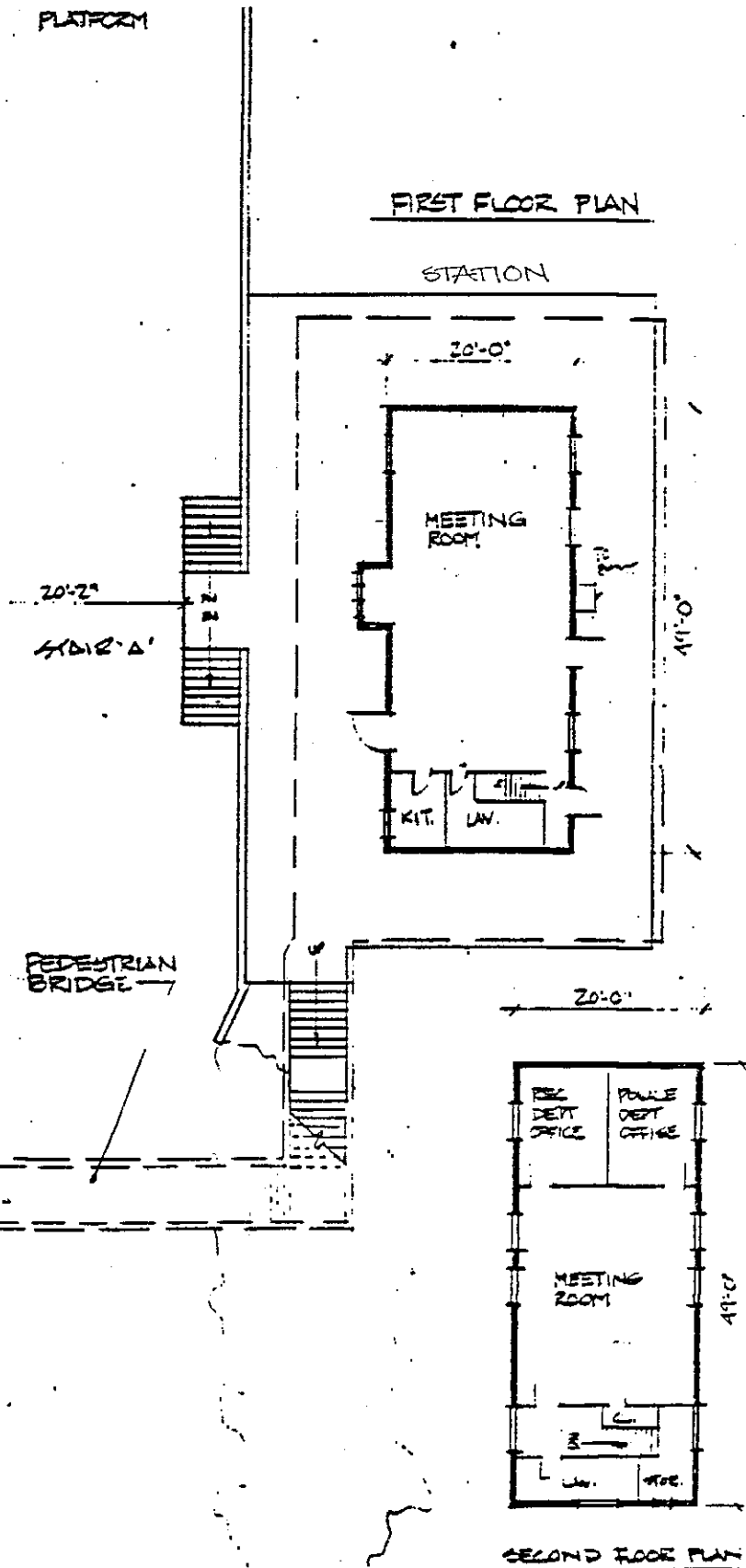




SITE PLAN



FLOOR PLANS  
 FANWOOD STATION



SCALE: 1"=20'